

Wildlife Program

Week of January 19-25, 2015

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Private Lands/Access

Whitman County Birds of the Week: Horned Lark, Gray Crowned Rosy Finch, Dark Eyed Junco, White Crowned Sparrow, American Robin, American Crow, Magpie, Mourning Dove, Eurasian Collared Dove, Ring Necked Pheasant, American Coot, Bufflehead, Canada Goose, Rough Legged Hawk, Red Tailed Hawk, Kestrel, Prairie Falcon, Gyrfalcon (Rock Lake), and Bald Eagle.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Winter Conditions

District Biologists – District 1: Other than a skiff of snow falling this week mainly in the mountains, winter conditions remained generally mild. As of January 23rd, the 49 degrees North Ski Resort had 28 inches of snow at the lodge and 48 inches on the summit of Chewelah Mountain.

District Biologists – District 2: Weather in District 2 included nighttime temperatures in the upper 20s and highs in the mid-30s, with patchy ice, fog, and low clouds for most of the week. One night of snow was followed by rain and temperatures warming to the mid-40s at the end of the week, producing dense fog.

Private Lands – District One: Weather during the week was cold and foggy and then increasingly mild with snow at the end of the week. High temperatures ranged from 26-38 degrees.

Private Lands – District 2: Near freezing temperatures all week with occasional mornings of dense fog.

Private Lands – District 3: Rising temperatures reaching close to 50 degrees during the day.

Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area: Daily fog or low clouds, daytime temperatures in the mid to upper 30s, nighttime temperatures in low 30s. No snow cover. Gravel roads are getting soft, so drivers should take care.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Damage Preventative Cooperative Agreements for Livestock (DPCA-L): Specialist Shepherd discussed a DPCA-L and range riding with a Ferry County ranching family.

Wildlife Areas

4-O Ranch WA – Salt for the Elk: Bio Woodall visited the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area. While there, he visited the Autry and Botts areas to put out salt for the elk in an attempt to keep them off of adjacent private land. He reports numerous deer and elk on the Botts hillside.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Areas

SCWA Storage Security:

Detachment 21 Sergeant Taylor and Officer Erickson delivered chain-link panels to Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. These panels were built for a storage shed at the wildlife area from which theft has occurred on two different occasions recently. WAAM Palmer installed the fixed panels this week. The gate panels will be installed next week.



Private Lands/Access

Natural Resource Technician-2 (NRT2) Interviews: Biologists Earl, Thorne-Hadley, Rasley, and Supervisor McCanna conducted interviews on four candidates this week to fill the NRT2 position for District 3. A fifth candidate was offered an interview but declined. Earl will be contacting references next week for the top two candidates before a final decision is made and sent on for approval.

REGION 2

WOLVES: Nothing to report.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbits: Biologist Gallie participated in pygmy rabbit surveys on the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Management Area (WMA) with WDFW staff and University of Idaho volunteers. Initial surveys are returning high numbers of identified active burrows compared to 2014. With the arrival of warmer weather and some rain in the area, survey conditions are likely to decline.

An adult pygmy rabbit observed on the Sagebrush Flat WMA during 2015 surveys



Wildlife Areas

Methow Post-fire Forest Management Project: Loads of logs are being hauled out of the sale area, and all logs had paint and brands on them according to WAC laws and contract. Skidding is mostly being done CTL, with a few whole or partially bucked trees, but snow back continues to be excellent and the operator was performing well on not damaging standing trees while skidding. Project Forester Jamie Bass reminded harvesters of the use of clear skid trails and rub trees, but continued hand-falling is making clean, organized operations difficult. Canopy damage to leave trees doesn't yet appear to be an issue, but may need continued monitoring.

On Tuesday, Bass performed a field visit with Doug Kuehn and Rod Pfeifle and discussed blue stain and operations. Blue stained pine is considered sub-merchantable by Boise and Vaagen mills, but little had been found so far. Later in the day, more was found in a one to two acre patch where 80% of cut trees showed stain. Due to harvesting costs, our only option may be to leave it in the woods, but we are working around the site for now.



Stacked logs ready for loading at the Bear Creek unit



Bark Beetle pitch tubes causing blue stain in timber – Photo courtesy of Jamie Bass

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Eagle Management: Biologist Heinlen continues to coordinate volunteer Fischer’s efforts placing and monitoring offal sites for golden eagle use as part of a Research effort headed up by Research Scientist Watson. His efforts continue to document golden eagle use and behavior, as well as a variety of non-target species.



Golden Eagle tussle

– Photo courtesy of Bob Fischer, WDFW remote camera



Coyote disagreement – Photo courtesy of Bob Fischer, WDFW remote camera

Wolverine Research: Biologist Fitkin assisted the USFS crew in maintaining and checking wolverine traps as part of the ongoing capture efforts. Numerous freeze-thaw events this winter have hampered trap operation with traps sometimes getting ice-bound and frozen open. Hopefully, the stable and dry weather forecast for the foreseeable future will improve trapping success.



Unknown male wolverine at the Rattlesnake Trap – Photo by remote camera, USFS

Wildlife Areas

Private Lands/Access

Columbia Basin Access: Access Manager Graves provided maintenance to the heavily used waterfowl sites before the last weekend of the season comes to an end. Some hunters were even seen “camping out” to wrap up the year.

Dodson/Winchester Wasteway Access – Photo by Joe Graves



Winter Conditions

District 6

Recent Weather: The District experienced above average temperatures with a few light rain showers and no new snow accumulations over the past week. We had further melting of last weekend’s snow with additional south facing slopes becoming more open.

Short-Term Forecast: Above normal temps and primarily dry weather is expected for the following week at least.

Long-Term Forecast: Warmer and drier than normal weather still forecast at least through February.

Snow Depths: Snow depths declined at all elevations over the last week. Minimal snow pack exists at the lowest elevations in the Okanogan Valley. In the Methow, bare ground on south facing slopes is evident as far up valley as Winthrop. Winter range areas generally have below average snowpack with only a few inches or less below 1500 feet down valley from Twisp. Snow pack continues to be slightly above average at the highest elevations near the Cascade Crest.

Snotel sites*

Hart’s Pass (6500 ft): 79 in
Salmon Meadows (4,460 ft): 19 in
Muckamuck (4,470 ft): 16 in

**No snotel sites exist in core deer winter range areas.*

Habitat: With below average snowpack and some bare ground, forage is available throughout the District on most deer winter range areas outside of the burn. Within the burn, forage is

limited. Incidental observations suggest shrubs that re-sprouted in the burn after the fires have received significant browsing pressure.

Animal Concentrations: In general, deer remain well distributed on the landscape and the low snowpack has allowed some animals to drift back up to higher than average elevations for mid-winter. Significant numbers of deer still remain around some orchards near Pateros.

Animal Condition: In most areas, deer generally look to be in average to better than average condition for this time of year. Some smaller fawns are in poor shape, but this would be anticipated under any conditions and regardless of the burn.

Mortality: A few cases of mortalities of smaller than average fawns have been reported.

District 7

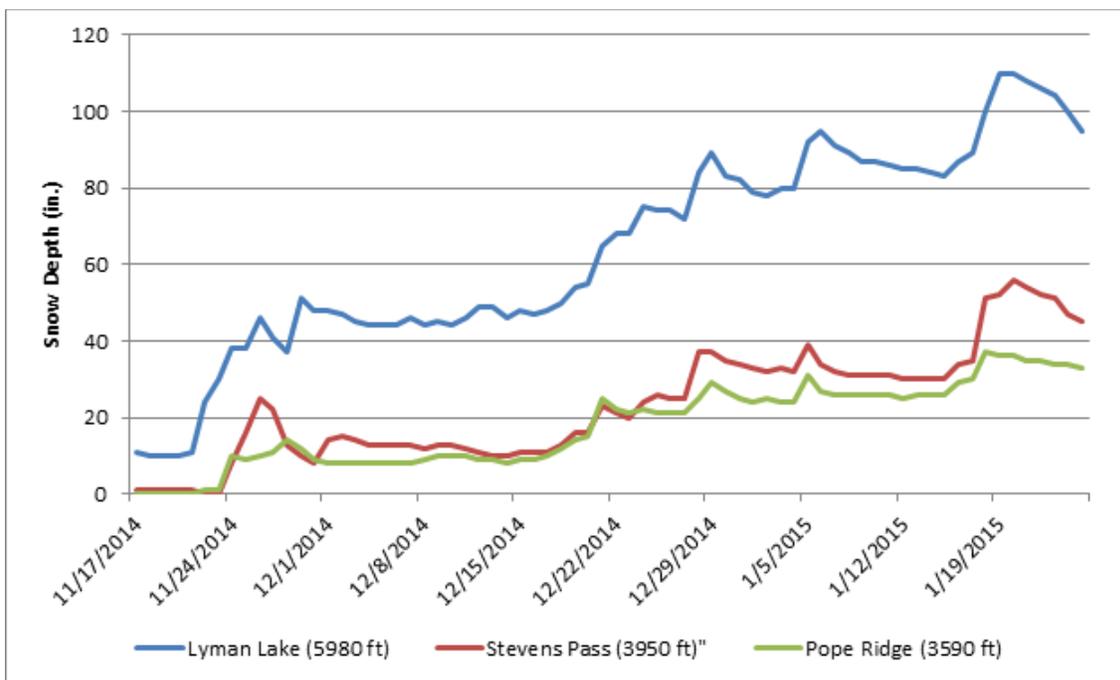
Past Weather: Low precipitation and higher temps have characterized the early portion of the winter.

Short-Term Forecast: Warmer temperature at the lowest elevation.

Long-Term Forecast: The long-term forecast for winter 2014/2015 is for higher temperatures and drier conditions.

Habitat: Recent fires have reduced landscape capability. The late onset of higher snow depths have allowed deer to occupy a larger than normal wintering area.

Snow Depths:



Animal Concentrations: The recent accumulation of additional snow at mid-elevations should result in deer being more heavily concentrated on traditional winter ranges.

Mortality: Normal rates of winter mortality are anticipated. There is no evidence of increased mortality at this time.

Public Contacts: None



Still excellent backcountry skiing and snowshoeing on the Methow Wildlife Area –
Photo courtesy of Jamie Bass





Above (from left to right) – North Pygmy Owl perched above HQ access road near Sinlahekin Creek, a Rough-legged Hawk on top of a frosty ponderosa pine near McNeil Canyon in Douglas County, a Golden Eagle taking off from a snag along the shores of Forde Lake, and another North Pygmy Owl in a serviceberry watching over the timber harvesters near Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

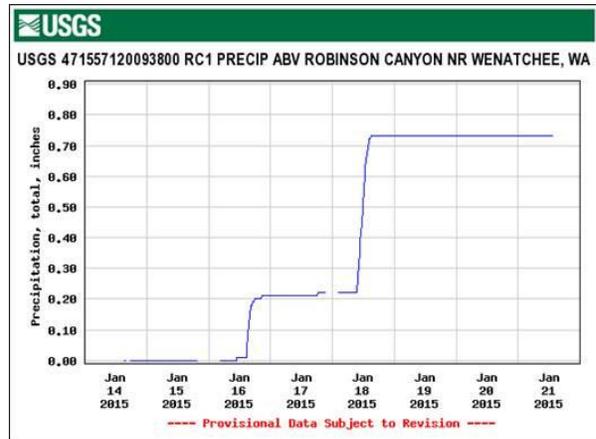
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area Winter Weather Conditions: In addition to the three NRCS Snotel sites on the wildlife area, Colockum weather data is also collected by a rain gauge installed in 2014 by the Chelan County Natural Resources Department and the U.S. Geological Survey. This station was placed at the top of Robinson Canyon (a tributary to Colockum Creek) after the destructive flooding there following the 2013 Colockum-Tarps Fire. The equipment is located on WDFW property within the Colockum Wildlife Area and functions as an early flood warning system for private residences in the Colockum Creek drainage. Precipitation data is normally relayed hourly by a satellite transmitter. Data is transmitted with increasing frequency as precipitation increases, allowing the National Weather Service to issue weather alerts. While the equipment is primarily designed to collect rainfall information, the stations are kept active throughout the winter in case of a rain-on-snow event.



The USGS rain gauge at Robinson Canyon, Colockum Wildlife Area



Robinson Canyon rain gauge data showing recent precipitation on Colockum Wildlife Area



Weather this week started out with a snow event on Sunday, January 18th, but then turned dry with lows in the 30s. Lows reached into the mid-40s by the weekend. Some snow still remains at low elevations, although most south-facing slopes are bare on big game winter range. The West Bar area is currently snow-free and supporting approximately two hundred wintering elk.

Jan 22, 2015 photo of West Bar, Colockum Wildlife Area showing lack of snow and current river levels

The forecast for next week is shown below:



Weather forecast for West Bar, Colockum Wildlife Area, for the week of January 26, 2015

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Oak Creek Staff adjusted schedules to feed over the weekend and MLK holiday. Staff continue to feed elk at the Nile and Junction feed sites. By mid-week, staff stopped feeding the big horn sheep due to mild weather and there are no plans to trap until the weather changes.

Peak Elk Counts for Week:

Headquarters-
Junction- 329
Nile-290
Sheep-170
Cowiche-

Winter Weather: We had mild weather this past week and several days of fog. By the weekend, highs were near 60 degrees. Mild weather is expected this coming week with highs in the 40s and lows at or above freezing. There are minimal chances of precipitation in the forecast.

Elk are in the area and come into the feed site occasionally. Access to vegetation remains good with no snow at lower elevations. There is minimal grass green up.

Elk are in seasonally good condition.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris contacted Crystal Bui of KIMA Television, regarding her request for information on how the mild winter is affecting elk feeding and costs versus a 'normal' winter. Morris provided her with general information on factors that affect feeding and costs and agreed to get in touch later in the winter when we would have a better idea of how the winter feeding went.

Winter Feeding

Mellotte Feed Site elk numbers: ~700 animals.

Elk feeding continues on a light scale, with animals roaming out onto adjacent slopes with the warmer weather, but staying within site of the feed area so they don't miss a meal. Elk are in seasonally good condition.

Elk on slope above Mellotte feed site

Assistant Manager Taylor assisted with elk darting at Mellotte on Tuesday to collect control sample data to be used in the Region 5 elk hoof disease study.



Winter Conditions: Weather temperatures were above normal for the week, with highs in the upper 40s and 50s and lows in the 30s. Temperatures for the coming week are expected to continue to be above normal, with highs in the mid-40s to 50s and upwards of 60 degrees on Sunday.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Tech's Schnebly and Hill continued with the elk feeding program at Joe Watt and Robinson Canyon.

Winter Conditions: Winter conditions have been un-winter like. There were highs in the 40s and lows in the upper 20s and no new snow. The forecast for next week says highs in the middle 50s and lows in the upper 30s with a little rain. There are five hundred head of elk consistently at Watt and four hundred fifty at Robinson.

Wildlife Management

Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with the Benton Conservation District (BCD) to discuss a cost share for potential habitat projects. BCD may have some funding available for small scale plantings and the next few months will be spent identifying interested landowners and potential projects.

Stutzman responded to a call from a Kennewick contractor who had a hawk stuck in one of his shops for a few days. It took about a half hour and some creativity but after opening all the bay doors, Stutzman was able to get the Sharp-shinned Hawk to leave on its own.

Stutzman was on a conference call to discuss specifics of the required conservation measures in the Sage Grouse CCAA. The draft will be presented to area cattlemen at two public meetings this week.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz cancelled the Clemans trapping due to mild weather. Some sheep were entering the trap, but there were not many, and the forecast was for warmer weather. Long term, no winter weather was forecast, so tarps were taken down.

Biologist Bernatowicz programmed the GPS collars scheduled to be put on Clemans sheep heading to Quilomene. The manufacturer had programmed the collars for thirteen rather than twenty-three hour relocations. The VHF schedule was also re-programmed to give longer collar life.

Hoof Disease Study: Biologists Bernatowicz and Lowe (Region 1), Conflict Specialist Wetzell, and Officers Caton and Myers darted elk at feed sites so Dr. Mansfield could collect blood. The Yakima elk herd is being used as a control to compare to samples taken from western Washington elk. Eight elk were sampled from two feed sites. BAM was used to immobilize three of the elk. Induction and recovery was very similar to carfentanil.

Bighorn Sheep Trapping: Biologist Moore evaluated the potential for trapping bighorn sheep during the week at Cleman Mountain. The warmer weather provided snow-free slopes with a slight amount of green up, making trapping conditions less than ideal. The sheep enjoyed the sun

and grass and were not willing to venture into the trap. Moore removed the tarps to prevent them from being torn in the wind and trapping will be postponed until there are more favorable winter conditions.

Golden Eagle Offal Camera Station & Wolf Reports: Another offal camera station was placed in the Naneum. While in the area, Moore checked for wolf sign. No sign was found, but the search was limited due to difficult road conditions.

Immobilization Preparation: Biologist Moore worked with Conflict Specialist Wetzel to prepare to have and store immobilization equipment at the Ellensburg District Office.

Wildlife Conflict: Biologist Moore went out to the Thorp Area to assist Conflict Specialist Wetzel with hazing six bulls. The bulls were not found while WDFW staff were at the property.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky worked with Don Eckis of the Apple Valley Snowmobile Club to correct the WA State Parks website showing groomed snowmobile routes on the Colockum. There were errors on the map that could confuse winter recreationists. DFW's Wenatchee office has been getting calls from folks wondering where they can snowmobile and what the regulations are on the Colockum.

Assistant Manager Hagan removed the signs along the Tarpiscan Road restricting public access to the Columbia River shoreline. Most of the shoreline is now open to public access, except certain access points, such as the Yoyo Rock boat launch. The Grant County PUD is posting other localized shoreline areas that will remain closed due to archaeological concerns.

Colockum staff participated in two conference calls concerning implementation strategies for the Naneum Recreation Plan.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored deer activity and damage in several wheat fields in the Kahlotus area. Over two hundred deer were successfully hazed from newly seeded fields near Lower Monumental Dam where some moderate damage has occurred.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with the hunt manager of the Silver Dollar LHP program to discuss updating their expiring contract. More discussions will need to be conducted with the other landowners enrolled in the program, but very little if any changes are expected.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored the harvest of DPP permits in Elk Area 3721. No elk were reported this past week on DPP permits. Harvest since the August 1 opener is forty-nine antlerless and six spike bull elk.

Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with a landowner on Hansen Road to look at deer issues. The landowner was instructed on deer hazing and a Master Hunter was tasked with assisting the landowner to haze deer on a regular basis to change deer behavior.

Conflict Specialist Wetzel and hunt master Keisel worked two days on hazing elk from the Kayser Ranch, where elk damaged the fence of a heifer pasture. Elk also damaged fences on the Kayser range north of Thomas Road. Fairview permit holders pursued elk in this area and elk were hazed east and into the Coleman drainage.

A landowner in Reecer Creek called each day to report a group of over four hundred elk. This group of elk is highly mobile in this damage area. They cycle between the KRD ditch, upper Green Canyon, across Reecer Creek Road, and over to Sun East. Fences between these locations are damaged on a daily basis. Fairview Permit pressure and a few landowner permits have helped keep these elk for longer periods on wind farm lands to the west, but forage conditions in that area are degrading and the elk may be widening their feeding patterns to compensate.

Specialist Wetzel was called by a cattle producer who wanted to inform him that the cougar removed from Thomas Road last week may have been the one causing problems a few weeks ago in his calf pens.

Conflict Specialist Wetzel patrolled the Weaver Road area and located one hundred twenty-five elk on private lands in the High Ranches development. No access to the area has been granted. Conflict Specialist Wetzel contacted the adjacent landowner to the west near Robinson Canyon and explained about elk and agriculture conflicts in hopes this landowner will grant access to get elk on the correct side of the elk fence.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hagan worked on getting the pump for the bulk fuel tank repaired. He submitted a request through the Engineering's Web Work system to repair or replace the pump so we can access the fuel in the tank.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with habitat program and Yakima Construction Shop Staff about the old Tieton River diversion on the wildlife area. The old culvert can still flow water at high flows and the fish screen is no longer functional. The habitat program may have funding available to remove the structures now with a long term goal of creating some additional side channel habitat.

Oak Creek Staff assisted MM2 Brons from the Yakima Construction Shop on installing the hinges for the automatic gate opener. Later in the week Huffman installed the electronics and set up the gate. All seems to be working well, with the small solar panel able to keep the battery charged even on foggy days.

Manager Huffman worked on organizing a District 8 Team meeting in Ellensburg.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt had a phone conference with Project Coordinator Rusty Gigstead (Yakima Office) regarding the upcoming Parke Creek Livestock/Boundary Fence Project. Rusty had questions about specifications, access, and other details. He also plans to try and refresh staking next week prior to letting the project out for bid.

Assistant Manager Hunt learned from Kristen Kuykendall in Engineering that there will be money available for L.T. Murray RMAP work in the coming spring, but it needs to be used by the end of June and won't roll over into the next biennium. Hunt created a comprehensive list of road maintenance needs, potential sediment delivery issues, and any RMAP work that we can get put together and approved by spring. There are plenty of things in the hopper, including work in the new Gnat Flats acquisition.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom followed up on loaned out equipment, including a computer/GPS and a truck. One of the wildlife area trucks is currently being utilized by Conflict Specialist Wetzel. He is scheduled for a new vehicle soon. The Panasonic Toughbook is being used for waterfowl surveys by Matt Wilson. Inclement weather has kept Biologist Wilson from finishing up the surveys as planned.

Manager Bjornstrom contacted an agriculture lessee about removing refuse from the Hope Valley unit. Manager Bjornstrom made a trip up to the unit to inspect the new pivots that are being installed. Upon inspection, Manager Bjornstrom found several damaged wheel line parts tossed into the habitat buffer along the agriculture field. Manager Bjornstrom removed the debris from the buffer and stacked it for removal by the agriculture lessee.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Washington's East-West Bear Research Project: Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with ongoing bear den work. This portion of the project entails locating dens, placing cameras to document emergence and cub numbers, recollaring/adjusting collars, and potentially collaring yearling cubs. Work where newborn cubs are known to be present is limited (camera placement only) to avoid den abandonment.



Black bear den beneath a live tree in Western Washington

Mid-Winter Swan Surveys:

Biologists DeBruyn, Yarborough and Milner, as well as Techs Anderson and

Deyo, joined with volunteers to survey all suitable swan habitat in Snohomish, Skagit, Island, and Whatcom Counties. Swans were identified to species and age. Although the data is not completely in, it appears that over 16,000 swans were counted in the four counties. Counts were also conducted in San Juan County and the lower mainland in British Columbia.



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Oregon Spotted Frogs: Biologist Yarborough attended the Oregon Spotted Frog Annual meeting in Nisqually. Updates were given on past surveys, current research, and a discussion on this year's survey effort.

Mid-winter Waterfowl Surveys:

Biologist Milner completed waterfowl surveys in lakes and ponds, as well as swan surveys within Island and Snohomish counties. Data were submitted to the appropriate project leads.

Annual Marine Waterfowl Aerial Survey: Assistant District Biologist Cyra, along with Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson and Assistant District 15 Biologist Murphie, continued with the winter marine waterfowl survey this week and were able to survey four out of five days. Continued mild weather is benefiting our surveys though it bodes ill for the winter snowpack. These marine waterfowl surveys, the longest running trend surveys of their kind on the west coast, are used to monitor the population health of waterfowl, marine mammals, and other marine avian species throughout the Salish Sea. Additionally, the data are used to help establish season setting along the Pacific Flyway. With continued good weather the possibility exists to complete the aerial portion of the surveys by the end of January despite earlier delays due to aircraft

availability. These surveys, especially this year, would not be successful without the continued excellent service provided by Kenmore Air and Chief Pilot Chuck Perry.

Annual marine waterfowl aerial survey break near the New Dungeness Light House



Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: The WDFW and Ducks Unlimited project team hosted the third and final Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday evening. The meeting was well attended, as nineteen of the twenty-nine committee members attended, as well as five audience members and six members of the project team. The Committee discussed results of a hydrodynamic model that was run for six different design scenarios at Leque Island, as well as the application of the design screening criteria to each design. Notes from the meeting will be posted on the project webpage once they are finalized. The project team is grateful for the dedication of the volunteer members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, and thanks the Committee for the input provided throughout the process. Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Jenna Friebel met with the City of Stanwood and their consultant to present project updates and answer questions regarding the hydrodynamic model. City of Stanwood staff was unable to attend the Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Nooksack Unit Dike Assessment: Manager Kessler met onsite with WDFW Engineer John Hansen to check out the Nooksack unit river dike which was damaged by the recent flooding. They toured the site to assess the damage and Hansen will work with the Capital & Asset Management Program on how to best complete the repairs.

Fishing dock on Lake Terrell

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES



Wildlife Areas

Tennant Lake Boardwalk Renovation Project: The remodel of the Tennant Lake raised wood boardwalk continued with our Capital & Asset Management Program workers finishing the loop trail, except for the two open water landings. The fiberglass grating to be used on the landings has yet to be delivered. Work has also started on the wheelchair accessible section, leveling out the wood trail and dismantling the lake overlook landing. Manager Kessler met onsite with WDFW Engineer John Hansen to check out the work progress and discuss signage needs for the trail.

Lake Terrell ADA Hunting Blind: The handicapped accessible hunting blind at the Lake Terrell unit continued to be very popular with two disabled hunters. The blind was used multiple times during this last week of the waterfowl hunting season.



A long-eared owl at the Leque Island unit has drawn significant attention from bird watchers and photographers. These two photographs show the long-eared owl on the Leque Island unit and the full parking lot of recreationists. They were taken on 1/25/15 by Marlin Greene, who is a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project.

Skagit Valley Herald Interview: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton met with a reporter from the Skagit Valley Herald who focuses on environmental issues to discuss habitat restoration efforts on WDFW lands in Skagit County. The two Samish wetland enhancement projects, Fir Island Farm, and the ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Strategy were all discussion topics.

Island Unit: Manager Rotton worked with Habitat Biologist Cole regarding the HPA permit for the Island ditch maintenance project. Meis and Cosgrove surveyed an un-farmed area on the Island unit to determine if the area could be managed for agricultural or native habitat. The area is currently covered in Reed Canary Grass and patches of Scotch Broom. Cosgrove and Meis checked water levels and waterfowl use at the Island, Headquarters, Johnson/DeBay's Slough, and Samish units.

Samish Unit: Cosgrove continued taking photographs of the ponds at the Samish unit to be used for long-term monitoring of cattail and other vegetation and its response to ongoing manipulations (mowing, disking, spraying, and flooding).



Samish unit pond winter condition following cattail control mowing in late summer

Private Lands Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Survey: Otto and Deyo completed hunter use surveys at Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties during the last week of the waterfowl hunting season.



Waterfowl use at a quality hunt site in Skagit County. This site was a reservation site that allowed birds to rest and forage on non-hunting/reservation days.



Tech Deyo and District 14 Staff conducted an age class/ratio survey of Brant

Migratory Bird Stamp Proposal Submission: Biologist Caldwell submitted two proposals for Migratory Bird Stamp funding for Region 4. These two proposals would assist in enhancing lands for Migratory Birds. Specifically, one would be used to provide a 181 acre refuge for migratory birds and the other would be used to provide forage on select lands across Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish Counties.

Boating Access Management

Access staff spent the last two weeks cleaning off boat ramps on the Nooksack, Skykomish, Skagit, and Snoqualmie Rivers. Other projects included fixing the parking lot at the High Bridge access site in eastern Snohomish County and fixing a drainage issue along the entry road at the Ben Howard Road fishing access. We also added ten yards of gravel to the entry road at Ben Howard to fix pot holes and low spots.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Puyallup Sportsman Show: Hunter education coordinator Dazey staffed a shift at the Puyallup sportsman show. Dazey assisted the Enforcement Division in manning the TIPS (turn in a poacher) trailer at the show. The trailer and its message were very well received by the public at the show based on the many questions and interactions with the show going attendees. Helping to make the public aware of the deleterious effect of poaching on the wildlife of the state and legal hunters proved to be a well-received message. Information on what the public can and should do in poaching situations was disseminated, which helps to ensure safe but effective reporting practices by the general public when confronted with this illegal activity.

Biologists Yarborough and Milner and Tech Otto and Deyo volunteered to work the WDFW booth, promoting recreation and answering questions from the public at the Washington Sportsman's Show.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm assisted two ADA hunters to reserve the duck blind at the Cherry Valley unit. This has been a popular activity for the past month and the hunters express much appreciation for the opportunity.



Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton and Meis worked on draft agricultural lease summaries for the 2015 agricultural year. Manager Rotton assisted the CAMP program with an energy audit of the Skagit Wildlife Area residence for improvements and heating unit upgrade. Cosgrove disposed of garbage from the Headquarters unit shop and dumpsites at the Milltown and Johnson/DeBay's Slough units. Cosgrove and Meis painted the wood utility trailer used by Whidbey Island volunteers during the Western Washington Pheasant Release Program. During the off season, the trailer will be used as a mobile garbage dumpster for the Wildlife Area.

Meis monitored spur dike conditions on the Headquarters unit following this winter's high tide series. Wildlife Area staff will consult with Habitat Program Engineer Bob Barnard to assist with the development of the repair proposal.

Upon the request of Dike District #22 and a neighboring property owner, NRT Cosgrove and NRS Meis installed a gate on the dike on the WDFW/Koetje property line at the Headquarters unit to deter the public from walking onto private property. A "Property Boundary" and "Closed Area" sign were attached to the gate.

Island Unit: Manager Rotton continued to follow up on action items related to the barge lease agreement, tide gate repair process, and ditch maintenance project for the Island unit with Olympia staff in the CAMP and Contract programs. Meis met with stakeholders and engineers regarding retrofit costs for the barge. A timeline for work to be completed for this season was discussed. A group meeting was scheduled for next week.

DeBay Slough: Cosgrove and Meis surveyed trees and other vegetation at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough unit for a proposed tree removal project. The project would improve waterfowl habitat and hunter access.

SCL Wildlife Research Program: Biologist DeBruyn reviewed seventeen research pre-proposals for Seattle City Light's Wildlife Research Program. The program is part of their licensing requirements for mitigation of the effects of dams on wildlife. Six applicants were asked to submit full proposals for consideration next month.

Private Lands Access Management

Waterfowl Hunter Questions: Biologist Caldwell was contacted this week by several hunters asking questions about the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program and the Hunt by Reservation system. Biologist Caldwell answered questions about blind materials, website use, and site specifics. All hunters stated that they were appreciative of the effort WDFW had made in 2014.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received an elk damage complaint from a Landowner in Concrete area that was having approximately fifty ornamental shrubs browsed on by elk. WCS Witman identified that the elk have also trampled a flower bed and surrounding lawn area. WCS Witman provided the landowner a recipe for creating his own repellent, which the landowner has agreed to try. SCS Witman will continue

to monitor the success of applied repellants. WCS Witman continued to work with a Master Hunter who is targeting an injured elk in the Acme area and gained access to additional properties that the elk has been using. WCS Witman contacted two landowners in the Birdsvie area of Skagit County to continue to monitor elk damage on private property. The elk have been nocturnal in the area for several weeks. WCS Witman also received complaints of elk damage to fences on Russell Road in Skagit County. The landowner is raising horses and was upset about fence damage and injuries caused to two horses due to fences being down. WCS Witman agreed to meet with the landowner on Monday, January 26th to discuss matters further.

Elk Mortality Search: WCS Witman spent the day in the field with co-managers attempting to locate a mortality signal from a cow elk collar in the Acme area. Witman was unsuccessful at locating the color. One more attempt will be made to locate the color.

Sportsman's Show: WCS Witman attended the Washington State Sportsman's Show. During his attendance he answered several questions about upcoming hunting seasons and potential opportunities for disabled hunters.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted a mother in finding a traditional hunter education class for her two sons. Dazey also assisted another adult student to find and sign up for a traditional hunter education class

Chief Instructor Assistance: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey emailed Chief Instructors about the department's decision on on-line course instructor incentive permit applications. Due to confusion from instructors on the wording of the policy and following AAG review, the Hunter Education division decided to broaden the interpretation of the requirements for application for the incentive permits. HE Coordinator Dazey answered questions from instructors on other class issues and also assisted Chief Instructors in completing their Chief Instructor Financial Reports and forwarding them to Olympia

New Hunter Education Classes for 2015: HE Coordinator Dazey continued to activate new classes for 2015. This was following an email requesting that Chief Instructors post their class offerings for 2015 on the Kalkomey website, but do not start registration until several weeks before the start date of their class. This allows potential students to see that a class in their area is coming up, as well as when they can register. This should decrease the number of no shows as now a potential student will see a class in their area is coming up and will therefore not sign up for a class in another part of the state just to get in, but not show up after seeing a new posting nearer to them.

GOAL 4: SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Areas

Rotton completed the following online training modules: Ethics and Fire Extinguisher and scheduled the Sex Harassment Training required for Managers.

Rotton met with Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link to discuss the Leadership Program assignment to complete the training.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with a college intern to begin working on a GPS/GIS project targeting mapping of interior roads, trails, and historic features within the Cherry Valley unit. Mapping of features in other units will proceed as time allows.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Lands Biologist Interviews: Biologist Caldwell, Section Manager Calkins, Biologist Yarborough, and Biologist Milner performed the final interview of candidates for the Private Lands Biologist Position. Biologist Caldwell will make a decision on who to hire next week based on interview panel feedback and other criteria.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

New Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinators: HE/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted Hunter Education Program Manager Dave Whipple and Volunteer Program Manager Christine Redmond in conducting volunteer tips, techniques, and coordination training for our two new Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinators, Aaron Garcia in Region 3 and Bill Montgomery in Region 6.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Monitoring of black-tailed does and their associated young continues in both the Coweeman and Washougal Study clusters. Currently in the Coweeman cluster, seven adult does that were captured in 2014 remain alive and these females have two surviving young. Currently in the Washougal cluster, two adult does that were captured in 2014 remain alive and these females have three surviving young. During the May-June birth period all adult females associated with each study cluster will be monitored frequently and multiple attempts will be made to capture their fawns.

Columbian White-tailed Deer Relocation Project: In cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Biologists Holman and Stephens participated in this week's segment of the on-going effort to relocate Columbian White-tailed deer. The deer are being moved from Puget Island as well as the Oregon mainland near Westport, Oregon to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. This week, three adult bucks were captured by drop net. Two of the males were moved to Ridgefield while one was released on-site due to advanced age and missing and/or severely eroded incisors. The near-term goal is to establish an additional population of the Federally Endangered deer on secure habitat and further the overarching challenge of de-listing the species.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Wildlife Area Patrol: Technician Davis patrolled the Soda Springs unit and the Mineral Springs unit this week. He replaced several tattered signs, collected litter, checked on areas that are popular with visitors, etc. He found only a few people on the Wildlife Area and no significant problems.

Grazing Permit: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven met with WDFW Range Ecologist Burnham to discuss the three grazing permits up for renewal on the Klickitat Wildlife Area. One of the permittees joined staff at the office to explain how they utilize the pastures that they use for grazing, so staff can set up their renewal permit to better reflect their and WDFW's objectives.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2014-2015 SW Washington Management Area 2A regular season goose hunt concluded on Sunday, January 25th. As of the end of the day on January 25th, 562 hunters had checked a total of 1,320 geese at the three WDFW check stations at a ratio of approximately 2.35 geese per hunter. Notably hunter participation and success at the Cathlamet station was up from previous years. End of season total hunter and goose numbers have not come in from Ridgefield NWR yet. All zones remained open for the entire season and most zones did not approach the quota limit. WDFW is aware of the difficulties associated with this season and is grateful to hunters for their continued cooperation while we attempt to recover a declining subspecies. Thank you for your participation and congratulations on a successful season.

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A Special Late Season Goose Hunt: The 2015 Management Area 2A Special Late Goose Season will begin on Wednesday, February 4th. The purpose of this special late season hunt is to assist landowners in mitigating crop depredation due to geese. This hunt, which is open to select Master Hunters, will take place on participating properties from February 4th through March 7th on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Landowners experiencing damage from geese on agricultural properties within Area 2A can

sign up for assistance through this program at any time throughout the season. Landowners interested in participating should contact the WDFW Region 5 office at 360-696-6211 for more information on how to be included.

Master Hunters who are selected to participate in these hunts will need to abide by the same regulations and possess all of the same authorizations required to hunt geese during the regular season in Area 2A. Successful hunters will need to check geese at a designated check station between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Hunters with no harvest will report by calling the WDFW Goose Coordinator no later than 5 p.m. the day of their hunt. Regulations and requirements for participation can be found on pages 3, 6-7 and 9-10 of the Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Season Pamphlet or check online at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01635/wdfw01635.pdf>

Participating Master Hunters should note that a special permit and harvest card will not be mailed out this year. This year, the SW Goose Management Area 2A/2B Authorization will serve as the late season permit, along with identifying Master Hunter Card. The first harvest card for the Special Late Goose Hunt will either be attached to the SW Goose Authorization (if no hunting or no success during the regular season) or the last blank harvest card obtained from a check station during the regular season. If for any reason a Master Hunter participating in this season is missing a harvest card, they may obtain one from the WDFW Region 5 office in Vancouver by coming in and identifying themselves as a Master Hunter for the Special Late Goose Hunt.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Meeting with Weyerhaeuser Regarding Upcoming Citizen Science Hoof Disease Study:

Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and biologists Holman, Stephens, and George attended a meeting with representatives of the Weyerhaeuser's Mount St. Helens Tree Farm to discuss, among other things, access availability for volunteers conducting hoof disease prevalence surveys beginning in March. Meetings with additional private landowners regarding this citizen science survey are being scheduled as well.

Wildlife Conflict

Elk Damage: Conflict Specialist Conklin met with multiple land owners in the Randle area regarding elk damage. Conklin has coordinated a master hunter hunt to begin this week in the neighborhood of Silverbrook to address damage issues. This is the first time ever the land owners have allowed any hunts to address elk damage issues.

Cougar: Conflict Specialist Conklin and Officer Martin investigated a possible cougar depredation on a cow calf in the Boistfort area. Further investigation revealed that there was no definitive answer on how the cow calf died. There was too much secondary predation to make a determination.

D-10 & MSHWA Winter Conditions

Past Weather: November temperatures and precipitation were both below normal. Light accumulations of snow fell on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area the last weekend of November and at the end of December. Temperatures for December were above normal with slightly less than average precipitation.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 5,000 to 12,000 feet during the upcoming week. The 6-10 day forecast is for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation, and the 8-14 day forecast is for above normal temperatures and normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The February forecast and the three month forecast are for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at middle and lower elevations.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are currently snow free, with minimal depths at the middle and upper elevations.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The second winter elk survey was conducted on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area on January 6th, with one hundred forty-five elk being observed. The composition of the herd was fifty-one cows, twenty calves, and seventy-four bulls.

Animal Condition: Animals appear to be in good condition

Mortality: None reported to date.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.

The Public is reminded the portion of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle, and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30, 2014, to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: Mild conditions remain in District 9 with little precipitation in the South Cascades.

Winter Severity: The Klickitat Wildlife Area has all south facing slopes open and available to wintering deer. There is no concern for the current severity of the winter conditions on big game populations in Skamania County and the western portion of Klickitat County. The eastern

portions of Klickitat County have had no snow accumulation this winter and deer are reported in good condition.

Habitat: Habitat is open and forage available below 3,500 feet in most of the south Cascades. Snow pack at select SNOTEL sites in the South Cascades around 4,000 feet is approximately thirty-four inches.

Animal Concentrations: Elk concentrations are being seen in western Klickitat County more typical of March conditions and there are no reports of unusual concentrations of deer in the district.

Animal Condition: Animals appear to be in good condition and numerous deer have been seen in the past week with healthy fawns.

Mortality: None documented this week.

Public Contacts: No concerns raised by the public this week.

REGION 6

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Surveys: Biologist Ament and Biologist McMillan conducted and coordinated the annual Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey effort for District 16. Due to the scheduling of the annual Program Meeting, the surveys were completed a week later than usual. Biologist McMillan prepared for the surveys and sent final details on assignments on Sunday, Jan 11th while Biologist Ament spent time preparing for the ground counts that would be conducted the following three days. Biologist Ament reviewed previous data, accumulated maps, and made contact with numerous landowners to advise them of the survey plans. Monday, Jan 12th was the focus date to conduct a complete count of waterfowl within Dungeness Basin. Fortunately the weather conditions were favorable for the entire day. Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament led and participated in the effort on Monday, Jan 12th. Biologist Ament surveyed all assigned sites in the Sequim-Dungeness area on Monday, Jan. 12th. She conducted surveys at assigned sites between Sequim and Port Angeles sites on Tuesday, Jan. 13th. She completed her last day of surveys on Wednesday, Jan. 14th and counted all waterfowl at various wetland sites located east of Sequim. Survey conditions were very good this year. None of the ponds she surveyed were frozen over. Fairly average numbers of ducks were counted at assigned sites. At a few designated survey sites some other groups of ducks and geese were also located in nearby locations. A few searches were conducted but no new priority sites were documented. Survey data compilation will be initiated this week.



Trumpeter swans on farmed field



Pintails along Three Crabs WDFW land



Mallards and widgeon flushed off pond



Grazing geese and widgeon



Lone female bufflehead at wetland site

Biologist Tirhi completed mid-winter waterfowl surveys for Thurston and eastern Pierce Counties. Water levels were normal at all locations. However, several wetlands and agricultural fields that had historically become inundated with water during the fall and winter and supported large flocks of waterfowl have continued to be invaded by invasive reed canary grass. This has led to the complete drying out of most of these fields with no waterfowl use. Trumpeter swans were seen at a few locations. Ruddy ducks, ring necks, widgeon, buffleheads, and common mergansers continue to be the most prevalent across this survey range (not including coots). Cormorants also continue to be prevalent. Tirhi surveys a total of 41 sites, counting all priority 1 (supporting 100+ waterfowl on average) and priority 2 (50-100) sites each year and priority 3 (<50) every third year.

Dead Bird Submission for AI Testing: While Biologist Ament was at the Greywolf Vet Clinic, Dr. Tyler reported that he had to euthanize a Canada goose that a woman had brought in the day before. The woman easily collected it from a wetland area on her property. The bird could barely stand and its head was making a jerking motion to the left. There was no obvious trauma seen on the bird. Dr. Tyler suspected a chronic disease and euthanized the goose. Biologist Ament sent the Wildlife Intake Form to WDFW Wildlife Health staff and consulted with them about the goose. Vet Mansfield requested that this bird, which is presently frozen, be shipped to the National Wildlife Health Center. Biologist Ament also collected a dead Cooper's hawk from a local biologist that had found the bird along a saltwater shoreline. Vet Mansfield was consulted and requested that the hawk be shipped to the National Health Lab. Ament now has a total of five dead birds (trumpeter. swan, Canada goose, two Cooper's hawks, and a crow) that have been shipped to the lab.

Western Snowy Plover: Biologist Sundstrom finalized the agenda and logistics for the state Plover meeting, then facilitated the annual post-season (2014) Washington Snowy Plover meeting held at the Region 6 Office. WDFW personnel from the Science, Diversity, Shellfish, Enforcement, and Game Divisions attended, as well as representatives from USFWS, Washington State Parks, USDA, and Shoalwater Bay Tribe. Information detailing the results of the 2014 nesting season, fledging success, and overall outcomes were presented. Discussions for the upcoming 2015 season included funding, monitoring, surveys, signing, and data collection.

Sea Duck Surveys: Biologist Murphie, along with Biologists Evenson and Cyra, continued the annual sea duck, marine bird, and mammal surveys last week. This effort samples a portion of all the inland marine waters from Olympia to Canada out to the outer coast. Last week, four days of surveys were flown in portions of south and north Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The previous week, five days of surveys were flown in portions of south, central, and North Puget Sound.

Goose Check Station: Biologist Sundstrom worked the Raymond check station. Saturday the 17th of January was the final hunt day for geese in Area 2B. Sundstrom checked four final Dusky geese on Saturday, bringing the season total for Area 2B to 31, of which 30 were checked in Raymond.

Date	Species																Totals
	# Hunters	Cackler # Banded	Aleutian # Banded	Taverner # Banded	Lesser # Banded	Dusky # Banded	Western # Banded	Vancouver # Banded	GWF # Banded	Snow # Banded	Other # Banded						
01/14	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
01/17	6	2	0	2	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Totals:	8	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	12

The Raymond check station had nearly as many hunters as the Reikkola station, but Raymond saw more Cacklers, Dusky's, and Westerns than Reikkola. Taverner's, Lessers, and White-fronts were the dominant goose species of the Reikkola station. Nearly 800 geese were checked at the two Pacific County check stations this season.

Location	Species																Totals					
	# Hunters	Cackler # Banded	Aleutian # Banded	Taverner # Banded	Lesser # Banded	Dusky # Banded	Western # Banded	Vancouver # Banded	GWF # Banded	Snow # Banded	Other # Banded											
Raymond	137	148	3	9	3	69	0	11	0	30	0	45	3	2	0	9	0	3	0	3	0	329
Reikkola	148	99	0	6	0	176	0	108	0	1	0	34	0	1	0	19	0	1	0	9	0	454
Totals	285	247	3	15	3	245	0	119	0	31	0	79	3	3	0	28	0	4	0	12	0	783

Willapa Bay Waterfowl

Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom completed the fourth and final waterfowl flight in Willapa Bay. The last flight was part of an annual mid-winter index flight coordinated with the Pacific Flyway Council (USFWS). Bird numbers appeared to be normal or somewhat low. Of particular interest were approximately 100 long-tailed ducks (formerly oldsquaw). Their appearance in the Bay is unpredictable.

The annual mid-winter Brant ground survey numbers conducted by Bill Ritchie (USFWS) appear to be normal and consistent with observations from the prior five years.

Dusky Goose Surveys: Biologist Sundstrom conducted the January goose survey in Grays Harbor and north Pacific Counties while biologist Michaelis surveyed the remaining majority of Pacific County. The table below breaks down the species and subspecies by county that were observed by Sundstrom.

Date: 1/13/15	Species													Totals		
	Cackler # Banded	Aleutian # Banded	Tav / Lesser # Banded	Dusky # Banded	Western # Banded	Vancouver # Banded	GWF	Snow	Unknown / Other							
Grays Harbor County	583	1	5	0	906	0	526	2	558	0	0	0	59	1	1,213	3,851
North Pacific County	292	0	0	0	277	0	1,213	5	8	0	0	0	0	1	218	2,009
Totals:	875	1	5	0	1,183	0	1,739	7	566	0	0	0	59	2	1,431	5,860

Private Lands /Conflict

Biologist Harris met with an industrial forest landowner to discuss public access. Most of their lands are gated and only non-motorized access is allowed. They do have a disabled access program and are interested in working with WDFW to administer. Primary access problems are at lakes that WDFW plants with trout. Some road damage occurs. Litter, human waste, and nighttime use are the biggest problems. Last year they were contacted by the county health department because of E. coli levels resulting from human use. Region 6 Fish Program management was made aware of this problem. Biologist Harris is waiting for a follow up with district fish staff to discuss how we can assist the landowner with these issues. There are currently no agreements regarding the planting of these lakes for fishing. A proposal to assist the landowner with managing public access on timberlands is in the works. They manage approximately 70,000 acres in Region 6.

Wildlife Conflict

Biologist Novack responded to numerous inquiries regarding elk conflicts in Mason and Pierce Counties, coyotes in Grays Harbor and Kitsap Counties, deer conflicts in Pierce County, and beaver conflicts in Thurston County. One elk was harvested by a Master Hunter near Tenino.

Biologist Novack continued the oversight of Master Hunters in Thurston and Pierce Counties. A Master Hunter was deployed to the Skokomish River Valley in Mason County. Two more were deployed to Pierce County near Graham and Buckley. He also visited a landowner near Graham and provided a Pyrotechnics Pistol for landowner use.

Biologist Harris continues to be inundated with elk and deer issues with the occasional bear that does not want to go to sleep tossed in. Currently Master Hunters are deployed to most sites and Damage Prevention permits are also in use.

Biologist Harris was in the area when he received a call from a Master Hunter reporting that he had harvested an elk on a Cranberry bog in the Grayland area. Biologist Harris was present when the elk was removed from the bog and field dressed. He opened the rumen to look at contents and found a rumen full of cranberry vines and leaves with a few berries mixed in.



Other

Washington Sportsmen Show: Biologist Michaelis assisted in setting up and taking down the agency's booth during the Puyallup Sportsmen show. Two Roosevelt elk displays were taken, including "Herman" an 11.5 year old bull which was radio monitored for over ten years. The other mount was from a mature Roosevelt bull that died naturally and was recovered near Lake Quinault by the Grays Harbor Detachment.

Biologists Tirhi, Novack, Harris, Murphie, and Michaelis, as well as Chris White and Shane Belson, attended the Puyallup Sportsmen's show to answer questions from the public and provide outreach. There was considerable concern by the public regarding the elk hoof disease in southwest Washington. Some were also interested in opening dates and the upcoming season changes for the three year hunting package, which has yet to be approved by the Commission. As always, constituents were appreciative of our attendance at the show. Participation from Region 4 Wildlife staff as well as staff from the Olympia Wildlife Program front desk was truly appreciated.